

03 November 2023

Principal's Message

Science 2024

In recent weeks some of our key staff have worked on designing a new class-based science programme which will be implemented in 2024. This follows on from the science experts we have brought into St Thomas's School over the past 2 years and who have worked with groups of students across various science areas. As we continue to develop our outside areas for learning, especially through the lens of environmental science, we aim to create a positive mindset among our students regarding how they can influence our environment for the better. Students are constantly exposed to negative messages about how the planet is deteriorating without a balancing view of what we can proactively do to improve it. By developing a better understanding of environmental sciences and designing actions to support our local environment, students will have the opportunity to engage in our core business of reading, writing and mathematics while lowering their anxiety about the future of our planet.

Junior Classrooms Upgrade

Our property funding allocation which we get every 5 years from the Ministry of Education will be directed toward the junior area of the school. As we move through 2024 we will replace worn carpets, install new decking, windows and modernise the toilet blocks. This will bring the junior block up to the standard we have in the other areas of the school.

Michael Maher
Principal



To our lovely front office staff, Karen and Karen, for managing all our new enrolments for 2024. A very busy job!

Upcoming Events

November

- 07 Eastern Zone Touch (Y7&8)
- 07 Y5&6 Athletics Day
- 08 Y3 Trip to Corban Art Estate (M2PL, M2LU and half of M1)
- 09 Y7&8 Athletics Day
- 09 Y3 Trip to Corban Art Estate (M3RU, M3CL and half of M1)
- 10 Formal Assembly 11.45am – 12.30pm
- 10 Pizza Lunch and Mufti Day
- 10 Y7 Youthtown Trip
- 14 Bay Suburbs Touch (Y5&6)
- 16 Y6 Kea Crossing Trip to Rainbows End
- 17 Y6 Goat Island Trip
- 17 Junior Assembly (STEAM hosting) 9.45am – 10.30am (school hall)
- Senior Assembly (STEAM hosting) 11.45am – 12.30pm (school hall)
- 21 Y4 Zoo Trip
- 21 Bay Suburbs Athletics (Y5&6)
- 23 Eastern Zone Athletics (Y7&8)
- 24 Y3&4 Athletics Day
- 28 Y6 Science Fair
- 30 Y8 Road Patrol Trip to Rainbows End

December

- 05 Y5-8 Tabloid Sports
- 05 Board of Trustees Meeting (5.30pm staffroom)
- 08 Y8 Selwyn College Orientation Day
- 11 Prizegiving Practice – B&T Stadium
- 12 End of Year Prizegiving – B&T Stadium
- 13 Y1&2 Junior Fun Sports Day
- 14 Year 8 Leavers Assembly
- 15 Last Day of School (School closes at 12:30pm, no School bus running at this time)

2024 Dates

Term 1

Wednesday 31 January: Meet the teacher day
Thursday 1 February: First day of Term 1
Tuesday 6 February: Waitangi Day
Friday 29 March to Tuesday 2 April: Easter break
(Tuesday 2 April is a nationwide school holiday)
Friday 12 April: Last day of Term 1

Thursday 25 April: ANZAC Day

Term 2

Monday 29 April: First day of Term 2
Monday 3 June: King's Birthday
Friday 28 June: Matariki Holiday
Friday 5 July: Last day of Term 2

Term 3

Monday 22 July: First day of Term 3
Friday 27 September: Last day of Term 3

Term 4

Monday 14 October: First day of Term 4
Monday 28 October: Labour Day Holiday
Friday 13 December: Prizegiving
Monday 16 December: Last day of Term 4

Eastern Zone Volleyball

Two teams competed at the Eastern Zone Volleyball competition on Thursday 19th October at the Panmure Lagoon Stadium. Despite being new to this sport, students played well with determination and skills improving after each game. The students had lots of fun and proudly represented our school with great sportsmanship and team work.



Eastern Bays Songbird Citizen Science Project

Last week the Nature Ninjas participated in the biannual Eastern Bays Songbird Bird Count. These bird counts contribute towards gaining an overview of native bird life in our area which informs future plans around planting, pest reduction, and other environmental initiatives. Before we started our bird count we had to learn to identify the different bird calls. While sitting in the native bush at school we heard Tui, Piwakawaka, Blackbird, and Song Thrush.



Year 7 and 8 Elections

Last term, Years 7 and 8 learnt about how the New Zealand government is formed. Students then learnt about how an election is run by creating their own political parties. Each group had to decide on their party name, slogan, colour, and at least two policies to base the St Thomas's School election campaign on. Within each party everyone had a very crucial role. Each party had a political party leader and a deputy leader. As well as a design team, a speech writing team, a campaign video team and a debate team.

The party leaders were in charge of leading their party through the whole election process, checking in with their party members, making decisions and creating their political party website. The design team digitally designed their party logo and created their party billboards. The speech writing team wrote the speech for their leaders to deliver to help voters decide who they should vote for. The campaign video directors worked hard to record and edit the political parties campaign videos which were presented to all of Year 7 and 8.

Year 7 and 8 then went to the polling booth where they had the opportunity to vote for a political party. The top six parties from the first round of voting presented their persuasive arguments in a debate about what the school should spend the money on if they were given an extra, one off \$100,000, what curriculum area we should do more of and what they think the Year 7 and 8 Intermediate Department should be doing more of. Finally, we held the last round of voting to decide the winning party.

It was an engaging and valuable learning experience for everyone involved. We had to be responsible because our whole political party depended on us doing our job, we showed resilience as often we did not get our preferred idea when working in a group and we had to show respect to others ideas and political party views. Congratulations to Xanadu Global who was the winning political party by only one vote!



Year 4 and 8 Buddy Classes

Buddy classes involve students from different years pairing up. One of the benefits of the buddy class system is the opportunity it provides for students to connect with other students across the school. It also allows students to reflect and critically think about how their participation affects others and produce positive solutions. For many of the Year 8 students it offered leadership as they interacted with the juniors and got to know some of their similarities and differences.



Year 3 Update

Our topic focus is in full swing with many exciting projects underway. In Week 1, we grew beans in a bag and watched them sprout with excitement on our classroom windows! We have kept some of the beans to plant into our new garden bed and hopefully we will get to taste a bean or two before the end of term!

We have investigated plant capillary action with the rainbow celery food colouring experiment. Watching celery turn blue or red is very exciting!

Finally, we have been studying earthworms and have taken on the important job of feeding the Tiger Worms in the school hungry bins. Did you know that New Zealand has over 200 known species of earthworms and the majority of these are endemic, meaning they are exclusive to Aotearoa? Extraordinary!



Year 2 Update

Inspired by our visit from Science in a Van earlier this term the Year 2s are doing a science rotation. Here are a few photos from our experiments so far...



Music Programme

St Thomas's School is looking to expand our itinerant music program. Learning a musical instrument is great for a child's learning and development and is lots of fun! St Thomas's will potentially be offering violin, clarinet, saxophone and trumpet lessons next year. If you think your child would be interested, there is a survey available on hero to express interest in learning one of these instruments in 2024. There is more information about our new 2024 itinerant music program on the survey. If you have any other questions, please contact Alex Titchener (atitchener@stthomas.school.nz).

Message from House Captains

We need your help! We have connected with the food charity KiwiHarvest who collect non-perishable food items and distribute them to people in need. We would like you to collect pantry staples from your home to donate. You can bring items that are long lasting and non-perishable like canned goods, pasta and rice. Please start collecting items to bring in to school the week beginning Monday 20 November. You do not have to bring anything if you don't want to, but it's much appreciated if you can! There also might be prizes for the class that collects the most items. We look forward to seeing all your donations!





- **Christmas CookieTime Fundraiser - November**

2L CookieTime Bucket - \$20 or

1L Gluten Free CookieTime Bucket - \$18

All orders to be placed before 17th November for December delivery week of the 4th December

Place your order on Kindo now.



- **Christmas Hams & Turkeys**

Premium quality Bone-in Hams 3.45kg for \$73ea

Boneless Rolled 2.5kg Turkey Roasts for \$79ea

Place your order through Kindo next week.

Last orders 14th December.

Pick up from Saint John's Butchery from the 18th December.



- **Year 8 Leaving Dinner – December**

More details to come...



Reminders

Colour Run this Sunday 10.30am

Second Hand Uniforms:

Donate your preloved uniform for us to on-sell. Please drop off at the office



Why not consider joining the PTA in 2024? It's fun, rewarding and most of all, benefits the school and our Tamariki. Contact us on the email below or come along to our next monthly meeting to find out what we do. Next meeting **7pm Wednesday 8th November 2023, in the school staffroom.**

We encourage you to contact us with your thoughts & suggestions any time at stthomasschoolpta@gmail.com and don't forget to Like us on Facebook!



Facebook/StThomasSchoolPTA